

## Private school participation in Title I

Private school participation in Title I, Part A requires that the local school district provide a Title I program at the private/nonpublic school. The private/nonpublic school cannot just use funds for professional development and supplies.

A Title I program at a private/nonpublic school will consist of the following elements: identification of eligible students, supplemental instruction, progress and benchmark assessment, and a process to exit students. The program must be monitored for effectiveness and evaluated on a yearly basis. Both the public and private/nonpublic schools must work together to provide an effective program to students. It is important to note that the public school district runs the program at the private/nonpublic school. All materials purchased belong to the district, and all staff members hired for instruction are employees of the district.

The [United States Department of Education](#) website contains up-to-date information on ESEA/ESSA requirements for private/nonpublic school participation in Title I. Here is a link to the updated guidance:

[NON-REGULATORY GUIDANCE: FISCAL CHANGES AND EQUITABLE SERVICES REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 \(ESEA\), AS AMENDED BY THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT \(ESSA\)](#)

### Title I Equitable Services Process and Explanations

**Private/nonpublic notification**-In March of each year, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) sends out letters to all districts that have private/nonpublic schools within their boundaries informing them of their responsibility of contacting these schools to let them know about their right to participate in federal programs. Districts must send these notifications to all private/nonpublic schools and establish a protocol and timeline for this process. The notifications should be sent out by the public school district by certified/registered mail. The district should also have a final date for return of the forms that will indicate whether or not the private/nonpublic school will participate in all, some, or none of the federal programs. Districts must compile this information and return it to the OPI. This information is due by April of each year.

**Consultation**-If a private/nonpublic school has decided to participate in Title I, the district must then set up a series of meetings with that entity to develop the Title I program. These meetings should begin no later than April 1. A final, signed consultation agreement should be signed no later than June 30. Districts must submit a final consultation agreement to the OPI no later than July 30. This must be sent to the state private/nonpublic school ombudsman for review. The agreement should state the parameters of the program. The OPI has developed two fill-in forms for districts to use that cover all the required elements of the Title I program. Districts may use their own forms as long as they contain all of the information that is on the OPI document. Consultation must be on-going, and meetings should take place on a regular basis over the course of the year.

**Title I program**-The district must run a targeted assistance program at the private/nonpublic school in which the district and private/nonpublic school identified eligible Title I students. This process should entail using multiple, educationally related processes for determination. In grades pre-K through 2, paper/pencil processes are not considered appropriate. Classroom observations, teacher/parent referrals, and grades are acceptable. In grades 3-12, the previous processes are allowable along with

paper/pencil/computer assessments. The private/nonpublic school should use its own processes to determine the initial pool of Title I eligible students. The public school district will further test this group of students to determine the actual number of students. This eligible group of students will be put in a prioritized list with the student most needing assistance at the top and the least needy at the bottom. Both schools will need to determine the actual number of students that can be served with the available funds.

Other than the identification of the eligible Title I students, the testing procedures must be used to determine a student's missing or lacking skill sets. This should be the focus of the Title I program. The Title I teacher must work with the child's classroom teacher(s) to develop a program for daily assistance in doing the school work and to address the underlying academic issues. Student progress should be tracked using progress and benchmark assessments to inform instruction. If student goals are not being met, then changes must be made. Students who meet goals and are ready to be exited (with proper academic supports initiated) should be moved out of the program, and the next eligible student can enter the program.

**Program evaluation**-Title I requires that the Title I program at the private/nonpublic school be evaluated on a yearly basis. This means looking at student data, instruction, and all the other parts of the program. Changes can be made during the year or for the upcoming year, depending on need. This should be part of the ongoing consultation process.

#### **Acceptable uses of funds**

**Supplies**-Any materials purchased with Title I funds must be used to support the program. Funds cannot be used for other purposes, and they are the property of the public school district. Should the Title I program end at the private/nonpublic school, all materials must be returned to the public school district. Requisitions for supplies must be submitted on district forms, and they must follow all required purchasing protocols. Title I funds cannot be used for building improvement. Since the district owns all purchased items, adding a room, wall, electrical outlets, etc., cannot be removed if the Title I program ends and are, therefore, not allowable expenditures. The determination of the types of supplies needed should be established during the consultation process.

**Professional development (PD)**-all PD should be in support of the Title I program. Since all private/nonpublic school teachers will come into contact with eligible Title I students, they are eligible for PD activities. All travel arrangements, including registration, hotel accommodations, travel reservations, and per diem, must be handled by the public school district. These processes must follow normal district procedures. All planned PD activities should be discussed and finalized during the consultation process.

**Expenditures of funds**-The public school must keep control and expend all funds. No money can be given to the private/nonpublic school. Reimbursement can be given to individuals employed by the private/nonpublic school when appropriate. Reimbursement procedures must follow the district's own protocols.

**Minor equitable share set aside funds**-In certain cases, the equitable share amounts for a participating private/nonpublic school may be too small to provide a Title I program. In these instances, the district and private/nonpublic schools can pool the funds to provide some sort of Title I program. If this is not feasible, the district can allow the funds to be used for professional development and supplies as long as

the private/nonpublic school has established some sort of supplemental educational program for students identified as in need of Title I services. Supplies purchased should only be used for these students and, therefore, cannot be used in the regular classroom. Professional development can be used for any staff member who has contact with a child identified for Title I services.